

Strawberry Wildfire Resilience Project

PALS 55801, 03/29/2019

Located nearby Sly Creek Reservoir on and near the La Porte Quincy Highway, Strawberry Valley, CA, is one of a number of small, rural communities surrounded by the Plumas National Forest. The area is classified as wildland-urban interface (WUI), contains stands in an overstocked condition and having experienced an elevated level of tree mortality caused by bark beetles during the recent drought. These conditions create elevated wildfire risk. Most of the area is comprised of Sierra mixed conifer consisting of Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, incense cedar, California black oak, Pacific madrone, and tanoak.

We propose to reduce hazardous fuels and reduce the risk of insect and disease-caused tree mortality through mechanical and hand thinning, mastication of brush, grapple and hand piling, targeted grazing, and prescribed and pile burning. Thinning will emphasis variable densities within stands, California black oak release, and removing smaller diameter trees from the understory. The residual stands will be more open, increasing the amount of available soil moisture and sunlight for individual trees. Hazard trees will be identified and removed along roadways. We will perform road repair and maintenance activities within the project area to promote proper drainage and soil stabilization. Non-native invasive plants will be removed with the purpose of control, reduction, or eradication. The total project area is about 319 acres.

During field seasons 2017-2018 FRRD interdisciplinary team members spent time on site while working on larger Challenge, Devils Gap, and Mooreville Ridge projects. They performed survey efforts on ground most likely to contribute to wildfire resilience.

The project is part of the District Ranger's 10-year Program of Work as presented to the FRRD Collaborative. It will be available as a topic of discussion at the upcoming May collaborative meeting and at future meetings of the Butte County Forest Advisory Committee.

The project was entered into PALS and appeared on the Schedule Of Proposed Actions (SOPA) on March 29, 2019. The project area was part of the larger project area presented to the public first on June 16, 2016 when FRRD hosted a public meeting to introduce the Challenge project at the Challenge Work Center. Eighteen members of the local community attended the meeting and discussed the project with the IDT.

The project is anticipated to have a decision in December, 2019 and implementation after April, 2020. Please provide any comments to Eric J. Murphy, ejmurphy@usda.gov or Jason Vermillion, jvermillion@usda.gov